



The tragic events of the early hours of Wednesday 14th June 2017 which saw The Grenfell Tower Block destroyed by fire is likely to be one of the worst fire related incidents that this country has experienced. While it is not always possible to prevent fires, there are steps you can take to reduce the risk of a fire occurring. While fires in flats can potentially be self-contained, those in communal areas such as stairwells can spread quickly and therefore are particularly dangerous.

Reducing the risk of fire and fire spread

- Remove opportunities for arson through denial of fuel and good security.
- Fixed electrical installations should be subject to periodic inspection and tested at intervals no greater than every five years in the case of the common parts and every ten years for installations within each flat.
- Heating and ventilation and lighting systems should be maintained regularly.
- Remove or prevent the use of waste chutes by sealing the hatches, ensure suitable alternative arrangements are in place for the removal of waste from tenants' flats.

Fire protection

- Benchmarks should be used to assess the standard of fire protection in a block of flats.
- While the appropriate solution might be to restore what was originally in place, upgrading to achieve current benchmarks should take place when the opportunity arises, such as through the normal process of refurbishment.
- When upgrading fire precautions, fire protection products and services should be fit for purpose and properly installed. Third party certification schemes are available for many such products and services.
- Effective compartmentation is fundamental to ensuring adequate fire safety in blocks of flats. It is therefore vital that floors and walls are in good condition and that there are no openings that would permit uncontrolled spread of fire and smoke.
- Particular attention should be given to the potential for fire-spread through common ventilation ducts.
- Emergency escape routes from flats in some older blocks may involve forms of alternative exit, such as linking balconies and pass doors that are no longer recommended.
- The fitting of suitable self-closing devices to flat entrance doors is an essential short-term measure.



- While fire exit signs will not often be required in blocks of flats, particularly those with a single stairway, they are required wherever there are alternative exit routes, secondary exits, across a flat roof or anywhere where there is potential for confusion.
- Emergency escape lighting is required in all but the smallest of blocks.
- All flats should be provided with smoke alarms installed in accordance with BS 5839-6.
- Where, on rare occasions, fire alarm systems are installed in the common parts, these systems should comply with BS 5839-1. Use of smoke alarms in the common parts is inappropriate.
- Provision of fire extinguishers or hose reels is not normally considered necessary, other than in plant rooms, community facilities, staff and common rooms.
- Fire-fighting facilities provided in existing blocks of flats should at least meet the standard of the day the block was built.
- Restrictions apply to the nature and construction of external cladding systems and to the materials used for facades. This is in order to limit the potential for external fire-spread, particularly in high-rise blocks.
- In blocks of flats, each flat is designed to be a fire-resisting 'box'. It is important to maintain the integrity of this compartment, particularly when building work and alterations take place.

Ongoing control:

- Development of a fire policy and appointing someone in the organisation to take overall responsibility for fire safety.
- Making sure someone is designated to provide guidance on fire safety measures required by the FSO and supporting this person with help from specialists, where necessary.
- Providing training to ensure housing officers and others visiting blocks of flats have sufficient fire safety awareness.
- Managing the risk from building works, including adopting a 'hot work' permit system.
- Putting in place programmes for routine inspection, testing, servicing and maintenance including fire-resisting doors. Carrying out fire risk assessment reviews to monitor standards.
- Putting in place processes for scrutinising planned alterations in order to consider their impact on fire safety.
- Liaising with the fire and rescue service and encouraging residents to take up the offer of home fire-safety checks.

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